Pacific County Healthy Communities Markets Health

Pacific County, a rural county in the southwest corner of Washington State, has very few grocery stores. This makes access to fresh produce a challenge for many adults and children in the county. The Healthy Communities program at Pacific County Public Health and Human Services knew that limited options for healthy foods were also affecting the health of their community. When they heard that a local city planner was proposing a farmers' market to boost the economy, they decided to join the market steering committee. The Columbia-Pacific Farmers' Market is now a weekly event from May through October.

Issue

Pacific County has more people living below the poverty level than the state average. Three out of four adults and teens in Pacific County do not eat enough fruits and vegetables and 18 percent of households do not know if they will have access to food. Creating a place for their community to find fresh fruits and vegetables on a weekly basis became a priority for Pacific County's Healthy Communities program, funded in part by the Preventive Health Block Grant.

Intervention

In 2010, staff from the Healthy Communities program at Pacific County Public Health and Human Services joined the farmers' market steering committee. The market was first proposed by a local city planner to boost the county's economy. The Healthy Communities team shared the need for access to healthy foods and the impact it would have on the health of their county. They also helped with the assessment of the community's readiness for a farmers' market and found overwhelming support. The City of Long Beach donated land for the market in the heart of the downtown. The Columbia-Pacific Farmers' Market is now open each Friday afternoon May through October from 3–7 p.m. It only sells food, unlike other craft-oriented markets in the area.

Impact

The Columbia-Pacific Farmers' Market provides local fresh fruits and vegetables, eggs, honey, seafood, and plants for creating home gardens. Shoppers may use their electronic benefits card at the market and some of the vendors are WIC (Women, Infants and Children) certified, making fresh food items available to low-income families.



